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# Big cities – ‘quiet places’

## tracing relationships between material and immaterial qualities of urban spaces

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### **Abstract**

This paper investigates the theme particular places from the perspective of ‘quiet places’, by examining potential links between material and immaterial qualities of four distinct typologies of urban spaces in the landscape metropolis, and offering five thematic lenses to sharpen our view for the particular. While the relationship between green spaces and restorative qualities for humans has long been acknowledged, the present research investigates other types of urban spaces, not focusing on ‘green’ or dB ratio as such but instead on confluences of soundscape, cityscape, flowscape, and other ‘scapes’ i.e. ‘material-immaterial landscapes’ in particular places in the two cities. This kind of particularity is an under-researched field also in methodological terms. We therefore set up a survey, in which we asked people about their appreciations of various material and immaterial qualities of the place; the conceptualisation of which derived partly from a pilot study and partly from a structured literature review. The responses revealed noticeable differences between the four typologies and less between similar types in the two cities. The results of the survey also showed a variety of expressions, deepening our understanding of the experienced qualities and simultaneously opening up for a new vocabulary addressing this interaction and its importance for ‘quiet places’, discussed in relation to methodological considerations.

### **Keywords**

compact cities; sustainability; material and immaterial space qualities; Zuidas; Ørestad

# Introduction

On a global scale, there is a strong focus on sustainable urban development. In European countries such as Denmark and the Netherlands, the compact city is regarded as a sustainable city model as it provides a good framework for energy efficiency and high service levels (e.g. OECD, 2012). Because the quality of the urban environment is essential for its success, it makes sense to study the perceived qualities of dense urban environments, not only in terms of physical and functional parameters but also in terms of immaterial qualities such as flow, rhythm, aesthetic experience, and resonance.

Over the past decades, relationships between green spaces and restorative qualities have been thoroughly investigated (e.g. Ulrich et al., 1991; Kaplan, 1995; Grahn & Stigsdotter, 2010; Peschardt, Stigsdotter & Schipperijn, 2016). In a classic study, Hartig, Evans, Jamner, Davis & Gärling (2003) found natural settings more restorative than urban settings; however, this study used relatively unattractive urban settings in contrast to the natural environments. The restorative effects of water in natural and urban settings have attracted research attention, and were found by White, Smith, Humphries, Pahl, Snelling & Depledge (2010) to elicit positive reactions in both urban and natural settings. Studies of the restorative potential of urban spaces are more scarce (though see e.g. Marselle, Irvine, Lorenzo-Arribas, Warber (2015), who are, however, mainly concerned with health effects of walking in urban green spaces). These studies derive from a raft of literature, branching out from ecosystem services and environmentalism.

According to findings from the WHO, noise is regarded as a major environmental cause of health problems in cities (WHO, 2011). Policy efforts focus on reducing noise levels along functionalistic planning principles, e.g. by designating 'Quiet Areas' in green settings within the urban environment, or in natural settings (Environmental Noise Directive, directive 2002/49/EC). Liveability thus, is studied from a natural sciences perspective, focusing on dB ratio levels and dealing with health and preferences, rather than identifying and conceptualising crucial, yet difficult to capture, immaterial qualities.

In contrast, the present study uses the concept of 'quiet places' to identify places in which one feels an inner quietness and feels aligned with the environment; places in which the environment feels stimulating and helps recharge one's energy, places in which the rhythm of the city feels positive. Such a deeper connection and expansive 'oneness' with the environment, which stimulate an inner 'quiet place', an inner climate, and allow us to move beyond the linearity of everyday life and expand beyond the restrictions of Euclidian three-dimensionality, is often acknowledged in relation to natural environments. In this paper we therefore explore the perceived balancing and uplifting qualities of urban environments and how the concept of 'quiet places' may add to the theme of particular places.

The core of our interest is the interlinkage between material and immaterial qualities of urban places. Our objective is to study the phenomenon of quiet places, and to develop methods for this purpose. We seek to identify interlinkages between place characteristics and their perceived value as 'quiet', by outlining four urban types and investigating their various immaterial qualities as perceived by their users, which point to potential links between material and immaterial aspects. Bringing together elements from the humanities and the social sciences, we combine a literature review, which highlights a number of theoretical themes, with analysis of data deriving from an on-site questionnaire survey and data from semi-structured interviews in eight cases from Amsterdam and Copenhagen.

We hypothesise that there will be a difference in the findings between the types as well as between the two cities.

# Themes for material and immaterial qualities

Since the 1990s, the basic understanding of a place as a locality in space carrying meaning for somebody (Relph, 1976; Cresswell, 2004), providing attachment for humans (Tuan, 2002), and being defined by urban built structures (Lynch, 1960) or natural topography (Norberg-Schultz, 1979) has come under challenge, permitting a broader and more nuanced understanding of what a place is or could be.

Manuel Castells (1996) introduced the notion of places of flow, and Doreen Massey (2006) described relational spaces. Both contributed to an understanding of networks of places, and of places being part of—and influenced by—other places around the world. The development of regional cities and the landscape metropolises makes this relational understanding of places more important than ever (Velde & Tisma, 2014). Important contributions to further understanding public spaces as places of multi-layered meaning, places to which different people attach different meanings, places in which it is possible to meet the ‘other’, those who are unlike oneself, have been provided by Ali Madanipour (1999) and Hajer & Reindorph (2002). In this context, place refers both to a location with specific material attributes and to immaterial qualities connected to the material place. In various humanistic traditions such as sociology, psychology, philosophy, and aesthetic experience, such immaterial qualities have been studied in terms of meaning, flows, attachment, aesthetic experience, atmosphere, and—in the Taoist tradition—chi.

Based on the literature review and an initial pilot survey, we distilled five themes of material and immaterial qualities relevant for developing the concept of ‘quiet places’. These themes formed the basis for the survey, which provided the empirical data for the present study and served as analytical lenses for understanding the results. The themes are Nature, Spatial Layout, Flow, Place Attachment, and Time-Space Pattern.

## Nature

The first key theme we have identified is that of Nature, understood as the sense of being part of a larger unity called nature – its rhythms and cycles, atmosphere and climate. *“We need nature in our lives; it’s not optional but essential,”* Timothy Beatley (2011, p. 3) states, suggesting the need for integrating ‘biophilia’, a term popularised by Edward O. Wilson (1984), meaning ‘love of life or living systems’, suggestive of the instinctive bond between human beings and other living systems with the built environment. While Beatley emphasises the material dimension of the natural world and in so doing strikes an underlying, anti-urban chord, Norberg-Schultz (1979, p. 23) suggests that *“In general any understanding of the natural environment grows out of a primeval experience of nature as a multitude of living ‘forces’, including genius loci, or spirit of place.”* Likewise, Kongjian Yu (1994) associates the concept of genius loci with the concept of chi, i.e. the immaterial energy at the core of Feng Shui, influencing the balance and harmony in all things, including people and places.

## Spatial Layout

The second theme we have extracted is Spatial Layout, which spans the encounter between others and oneself as it is enhanced by the built environment, its actual functions, scale, materials, and textures. *“Architectural space, because it can seem to mirror rhythms of human feeling, has been called ‘frozen music’ – specialized time,”* Tuan suggests (2010, p. 118), while Braae (2015, p. 122) states, *“The aesthetic dimension is not an optional add-on to managing the town and landscape as dynamic systems but an integral aspect. Aesthetics is not a matter of ornamentation but of creating experiences and spaces for social routines*



*and spatial anchored activities.” Araujo (2012, p. 44) suggests that the fluidity arising from the constant exchange of information has closed the distance between the person and city, in contrast to the Vitruvian principle of permanence, saying that “As Einstein demonstrated, matter and energy are interchangeable, but the greatest part of architects seems to not have yet taken that into consideration. Buildings need to transform and reach a mode of dimension that performs the passage from matter to energy, from data to sensations.” Also criticising the Euclidian perspective, Gernot Böhme (2013) highlights atmosphere, while Araujo (2012, p. 52) argues that, “topological space suspends the rigid dualistic and idealist logic of Euclidian space.”*

## **Flow**

The third theme is Flow, understood as flow of energy. The economic and geographic dynamics of the ‘space of flow’ have profoundly influenced our understanding of place and space over the past decades, focusing attention on flows of information, production, and knowledge (Castells, 1996). However, the dynamics of cyclical, natural flows as they apply to the natural world, whether at the level of the environment or that of the individual, have received less attention in the context of urban space. From a Western psychology perspective, Csikszentmihalyi (1992) describes the experience of flow as a state in which the individual may encounter a sensation of transcendence or oneness with the surroundings, a feeling that, according to Csikszentmihalyi, is at the root of happiness and enjoyment of life. Csikszentmihalyi does not connect flow directly to the built environment, whereas traditional Chinese philosophy regarding places and spatial layout, Feng Shui, may help us as it acknowledges the presence of chi—flows of energy. Chi is an energy that *“animates and flows in the landscapes of the world as much as it does in our own bodies and the cosmic universe,”* explains Mills (1999, pp. 71-77), while Jiang (2014) explains that *“The Chinese philosophy contains the art of managing the dynamics through a relative stillness or quietness”* suggesting that alignment with ‘material-immaterial landscapes’ may be key when looking for ‘quiet places’ beyond restorative qualities.

## **Place Attachment**

Place Attachment is the fourth theme. Doreen Massey (1994, p. 146) asks *“How, in the face of all this movement and intermixing, can we retain any sense of a local place and its particularity?”* and argues that what we need is a global sense of place. Earlier, Yi-Fu Tuan (1977, p. 179/2011, p. 3) suggested that *“If we see the world as process, constantly changing, we should not be able to develop any sense of place,”* building upon the underlying premise that *“Place is security and space is freedom: we are attached to the one and long for the other.”* At first glance, Tuan’s notion of place attachment seems at odds with Massey’s global sense of place but the suggestion from Alberto Pérez-Gómez (2016) about the importance of ‘attunement’ might reconcile them. Pérez-Gómez speaks of attunement as a connectedness with the atmosphere of one’s surroundings, of architecture and environments that can enhance our human values and capacities by being ‘attuned’ to a location and its inhabitants. Here we may find new inspiration in Tuan’s suggestion that space is freedom and embrace an understanding that allows ‘quiet places’ to also be anchored in the space of flow, gaining particularity and stimulating a sense of a local place.

## **Time-Space Pattern**

The Time-Space pattern addresses rhythm and urban pulse. *“From the Renaissance onward, time in Europe was steadily losing its repetitious and cyclical character and becoming more and more directional,”* suggests Tuan (1977/2011, p. 136). Lefebvre (2004) also draws our attention to the cyclical nature of time, suggesting that while *“Cartesian geometry is a reductive way of understanding space, so too is the measure of time, the*

*clock, a reductive comprehension, whereas cyclical time scales, on the other hand, are rooted in nature, the seasons, the cycles of birth and death, and the physiological rhythms of the body.*" In the context of social acceleration, Rosa (2015, 17:46-17:56) advances the cyclical perspective by arguing, that "It is not the concept of acceleration, and it's not the concept of 'slow down' that might help us get out of the acceleration cycle, it's the concept of resonance." According to Rosa, "we need a thorough analysis of the conditions of resonance" (ibid, 17:46-17:56), for which we may find inspiration in Norberg-Schultz (1979, p. 8), paralleling emotions with material aspects, when stating, "the everyday life-world consists of concrete phenomena, including natural processes and more intangible phenomena such as feelings." Thus equipped with inspiration from the literature review on material and immaterial qualities of place, we embarked on an investigation of interlinkages between these qualities and their perceived value as 'quiet'.

## Comparing urban spaces

### An explorative case study design

The overall approach of this research work is explorative and phenomenological, comprising a multiple-case study design with maximum variation cases (Flyvbjerg, 2011). An annual discussion in an expert planners' forum provided a transdisciplinary backdrop for defining the study's scope and investigation tools, including a 'semi-quantitative' questionnaire that served the purpose of providing a discussion space for identifying the phenomenon in question, as well as addressing users' everyday life experiences. Testing the tool, we decided to expand the method of inquiry by conducting qualitative interviews in connection with the questionnaire survey. Hence, interviews were conducted with over half (66%) of the survey respondents. Inspired by Lefebvre's (2004) invitation to the rhythm analyst we pursued an interdisciplinary approach, and from a point of neutral, multisensory perception, we 'listened' to the case study area.

### Case selection criteria's & case areas description

Amsterdam and Copenhagen were chosen as case study cities, as they share many characteristics, with both cities demonstrating a redefinition of compact city ideals in the context of the network city and the landscape metropolis. The two cities have sustainable ambitions, a strong focus on soft transportation modes, medium densities in the city centre, and a strong focus on urban redevelopment. There are also differences between them in relation to urban culture, and spatial and environmental characteristics, which on the one hand make them comparable and on the other hand offer a broader empirical basis than would a one-city case study set-up.

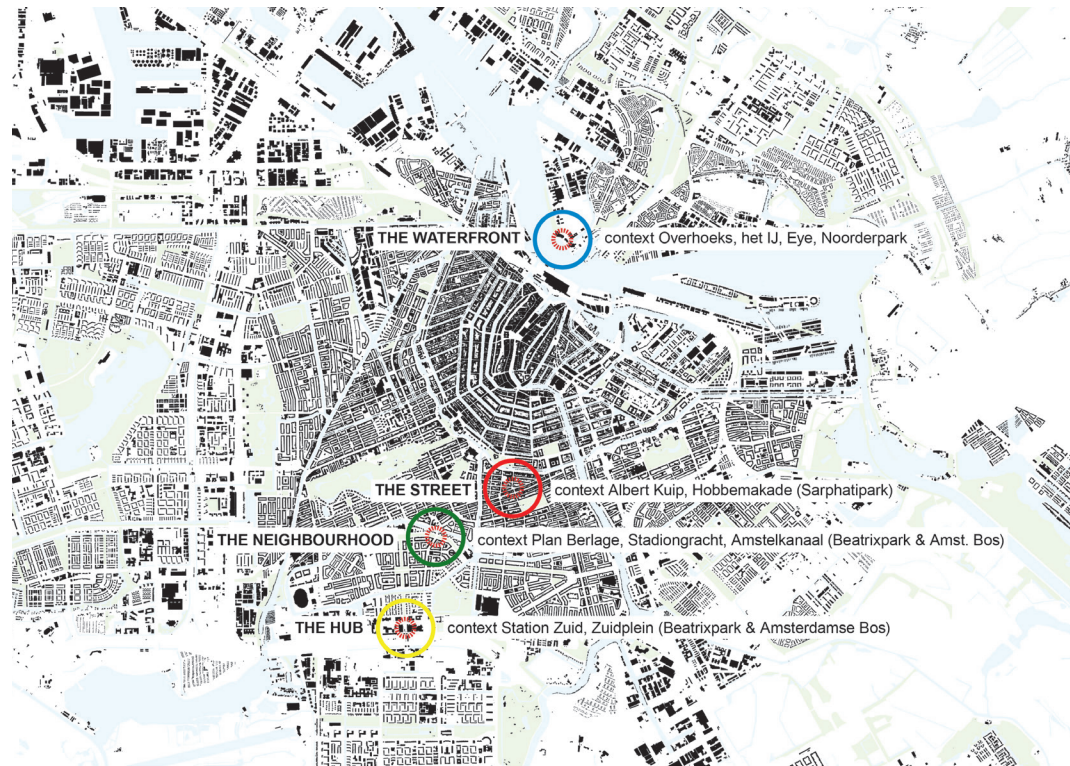


FIGURE 1 Amsterdam and the four typologies. (Image by van Haaster, J., 2016)



FIGURE 2 Copenhagen and the four typologies. (Image by van Haaster, J., 2016)



## Four typologies and four types

We focused on spatial types in the compact city, choosing four parallel urban typologies as case study areas in each of the two cities (Figs. 1-2). Focusing on relational space and places of flow, we did not delineate the sites by spatial or administrative parameters, and based the choice of case study areas on parameters such as urban context, functionality, and spatial characteristics alongside our intuitive understandings and sensory experiences of, for example, atmosphere and flow. We outlined four types, reflecting particular spatial characteristics: the Hub, the Street, the Neighbourhood, and the Waterfront.

The Hub is defined here as a place that is part of a large-scale, high density, commercial, residential, and infrastructural development, consisting of individual, large-scale volumes and 'generic iconic architecture', situated in close proximity to the airport and with easy access to the city centre. In both cases, the developments were affected by economic and political factors, opening up the area for alternative visions of its development. Therefore, in one case, underground development is yet to come, while in the other, above-ground development is still in progress (Fig. 3).

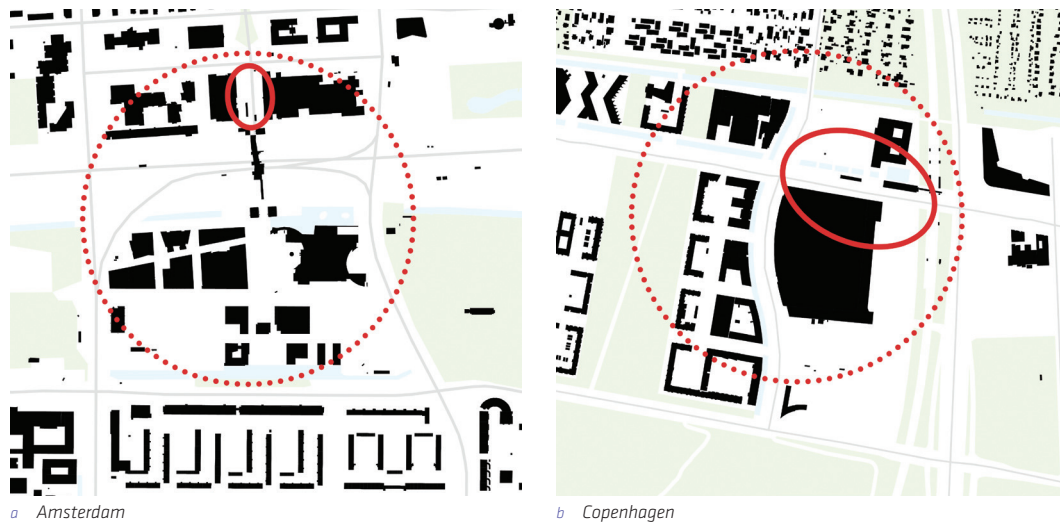


FIGURE 3 The Hub (Image by van Haaster, J., 2016)

The Street is characterised by late-1800s building blocks, including courtyards of varying private and semi-private status. Corresponding public space facilities reflect the characteristics of the type, as do materiality and landscaping, prioritising the 'street' and the 'square' as structural elements. In one case, public space use has already expanded beyond its original functionality; in the other, urban revitalisation including functional landscape and urban nature features are influencing public space articulations and dynamics (Fig. 4).



FIGURE 4 The Street (Image by van Haaster, J., 2016)

The Neighbourhood is characterised by formal spatial articulations across scale. The architecture and the detailing of the residential structures demonstrate an articulated sense of materiality and proportionality, reflective of an underlying 'human scale' approach. Wide tree-lined streets provide the area with a spatial generosity, along with the public space programming. In one case, the type exemplifies the inspiration of the epoch by emulating nature through its objects and features; in the other, functional landscape features exemplify another perspective by mimicking natural processes and cycles (Fig. 5).

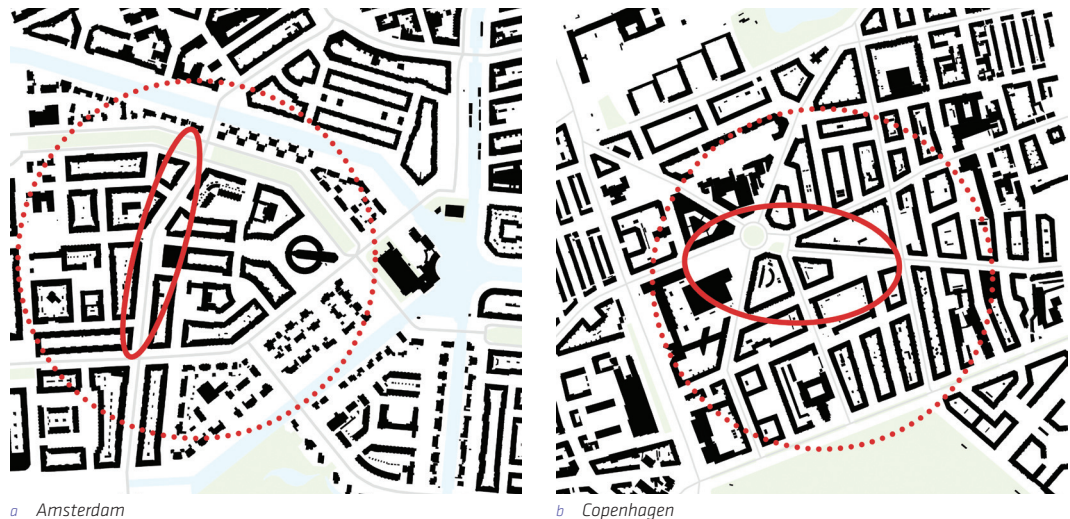
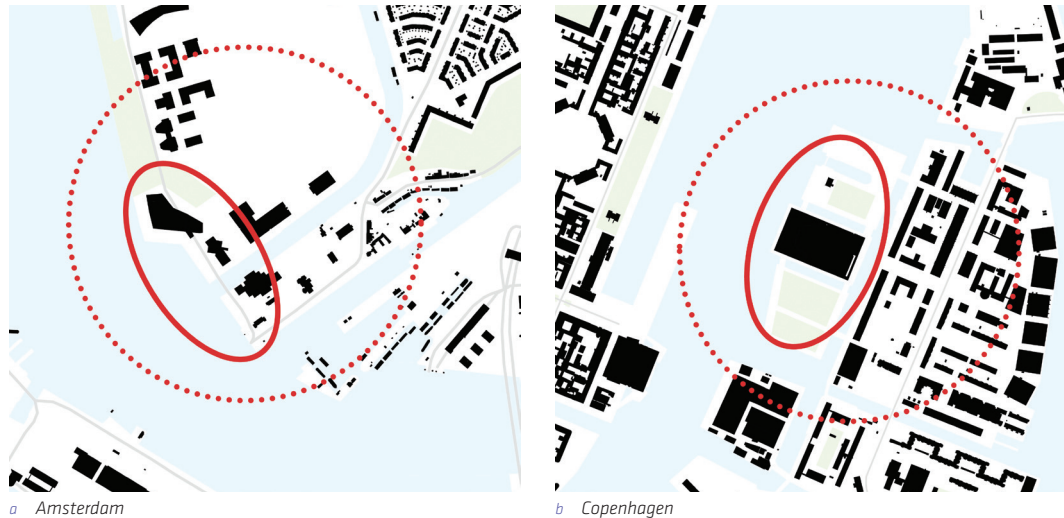


FIGURE 5 The Neighbourhood (Image by van Haaster, J., 2016)

The Waterfront is characterised by a number of large-scale functions such as cultural institutions and features such as monumental architecture, abundant space, unbroken horizons, and soundscapes that blend with the waterscape and the urban landscape. Situated along the water and close to the city centre, the atmosphere is characterised by cultural as well as natural features and urban dynamics, fully integrated within the urban memory and dynamics in one case, and with largely infrastructural connections in the other (Fig. 6).



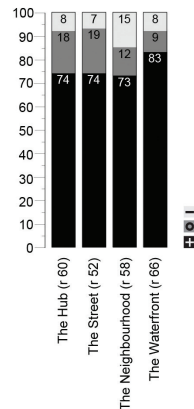
## Questionnaire

The questionnaire comprised a brief introduction, a list of associative indicators, and 12 statements reflecting the five themes: Nature, Spatial Layout, Flow, Place Attachment, and Time-Space Pattern (Fig. 7). Respondents were asked to fill out a five-point agree-disagree scale while referring to their actual geographical position within the case study area. In addition, they were asked to state other potential locations or reflections corresponding with the focus of the questionnaire. The 12 statements were divided into two categories, The General Appreciation Category and The Themes Category, of which the General Appreciation category partly covered the Place Attachment theme. This category referred to how much importance the interviewee generally attached to feeling connected with one's surroundings or with the earth, figuratively or literally, when it came to feeling aligned with one's surroundings.

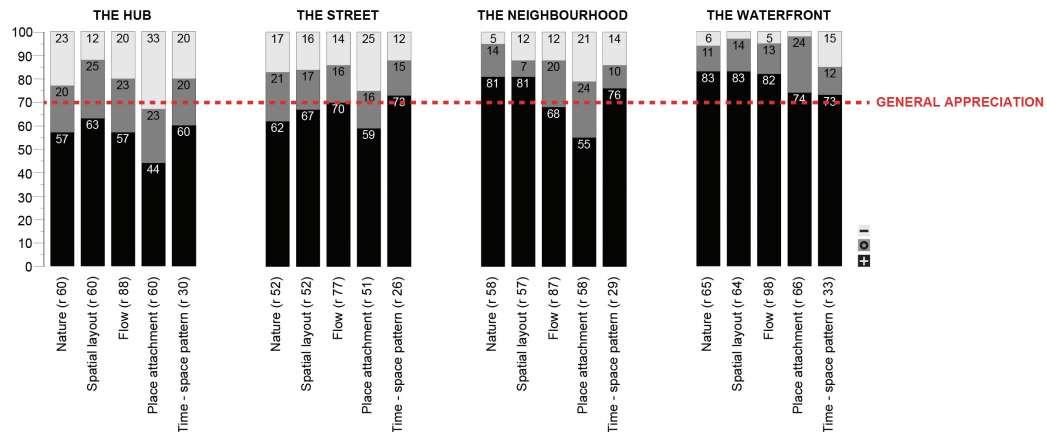
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## Fieldwork

Over the period from June to October 2014, fieldwork was conducted in Copenhagen and Amsterdam. In addition to the questionnaire survey, open-ended interviews were performed, of which selected quotes are integrated into the in-depth analyses, although here these refer only to the Hub. The questionnaire was presented to respondents on site, and each case study area was visited morning, afternoon, and evening, as well as at the weekend. Respondents were asked to provide factual information, revealing a diverse group of residents and visitors, but otherwise socio-economic factors were not part of the study focus (Fig. 8 and 9).



**FIGURE 8** Responses (r) to the general appreciation category (%). Each session was opened by asking the respondents whether it was important for them to feel connected to the Earth and aligned with their surroundings. Over 70% of respondents found that this was important for them, with responses from the Waterfront receiving a maximum of 83%. (Image by van Haaster, J., 2016)



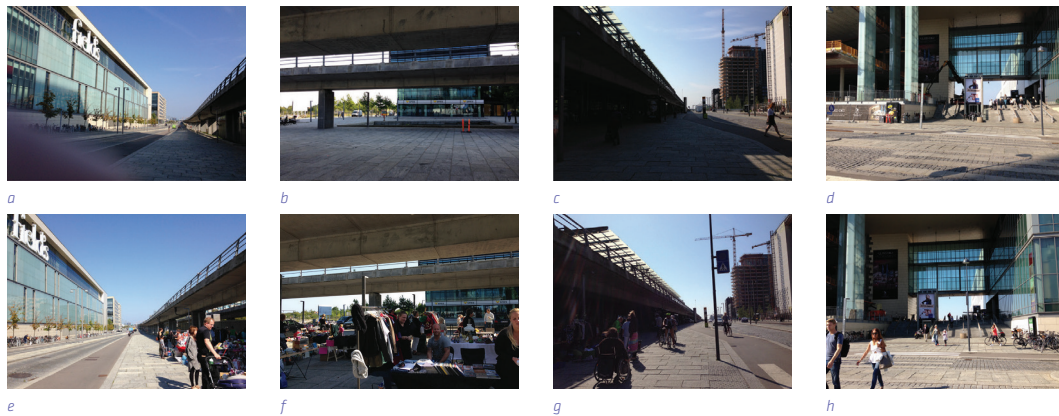
**FIGURE 9** Responses (r) to the themes category (%). All four types received more than 50 % positive responses to the five themes, except for the Hub. The dispersion between the positive responses to the five themes varied among the four types, having the Waterfront receiving the most positive responses, followed by the Neighbourhood and the Street. The type receiving the fewest positive responses was the Hub. (Image by van Haaster, J., 2016)

Serving as an 'opening and closing act' for each visit, first-person phenomenological and multisensorial observations, including notations and documentary photos directed North, East, South, and West were conducted as a structured 'listen' to the case study area (see Lefebvre, 2004).





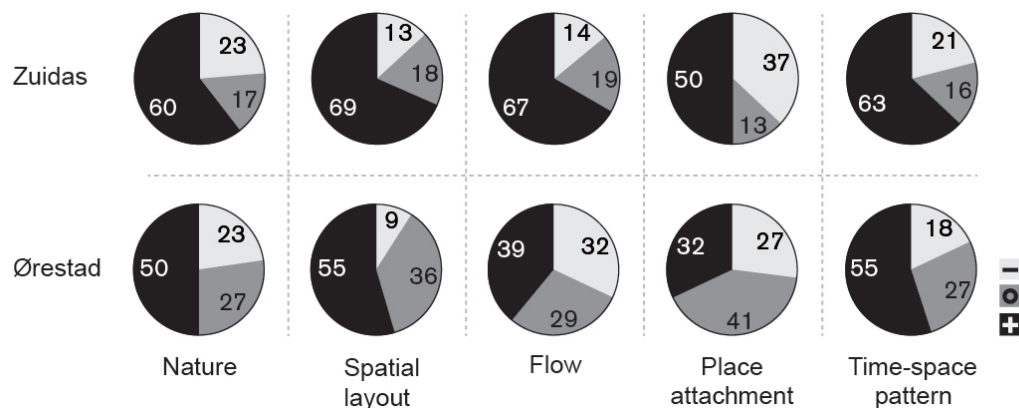
**FIGURE 10** Zuidas. Photos directed North, East, South, West on 7 July 2014. In the case of Zuidas, the station, including the planned high-speed train connection to Schiphol Airport and the wider Europe, central to the logic of the space of flows, “is a barbaric mess. For example, this station is not a station. It’s just a piece of canvas without a building. It’s an illusion, a very poorly designed space,” a respondent in Zuidas says on 7 July 2014. On 3 July 2014, another respondent says, “Well, it’s a beautiful square. And with the kids on a Saturday, they think it’s fantastic, all these high buildings. You don’t really have that in the Netherlands as this is all very centralised.” (Images by Wiemann Nielsen, H., 2014)



**FIGURE 11** Ørestad. Photos directed North, East, South, West on 6 September 2014. “Sometimes they make some events in the area in order to make it sort of yeah, it’s a weird area. It’s like they’ve sort of forgotten that it’s meant for people to live in – it’s all very decent and orderly, it’s very clean and... square, but not welcoming and warm. It’s as if they’ve forgotten about cosiness here (...) You don’t get more energy as such, but it’s convenient – very easy to travel to and from,” a respondent says of Ørestad on 6 September 2014. (Images by Wiemann Nielsen, H., 2014)

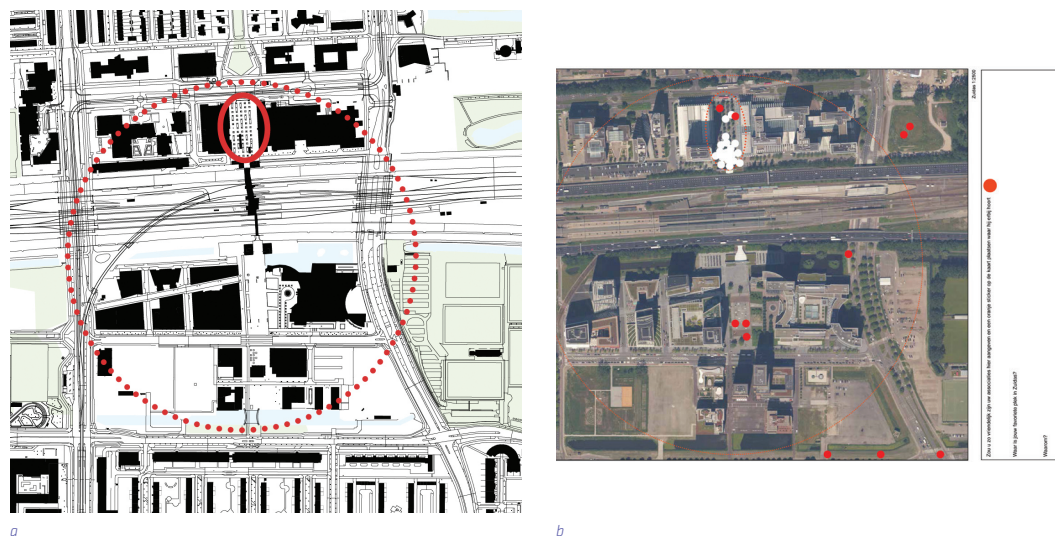
The type receiving the least positive responses was the hub. Curious to understand why, we performed an in-depth analysis of the Hub, represented by the two case study areas of Zuidas, Amsterdam and Ørestad, Copenhagen (Fig. 12).



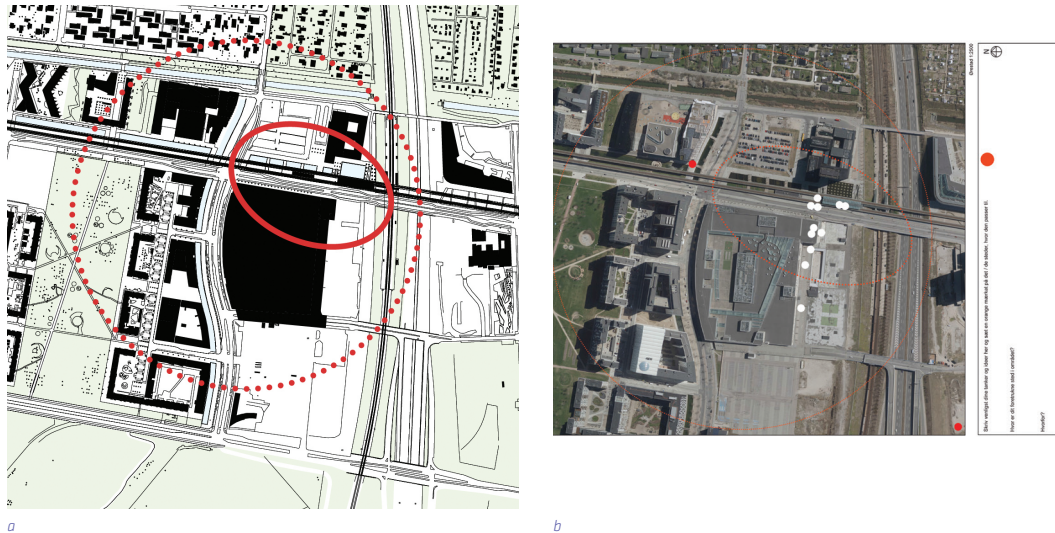


**FIGURE 12** Responses (r) to the five themes (%). The most noticeable difference between Zuidas and Ørestad is evident in response to the Flow theme. While drawing upon the same inspiration, the programmatic premise varies notably in the two cases. Zuidas provides a work-related, high-density environment, while the almost local reality and spatial layout of the only partially developed Ørestad area seems to not yet realise this premise. “It’s too easy, you don’t have any interaction within the area. The only thing you get is the flea market, and it just isn’t nice to be placed under a damned concrete flyover. It’s not nice, right? It just isn’t very attractive here, and that’s all right. But if you move out here and expect it to be the nicest place in the world, you would get a little shock,” a respondent says of Ørestad on 6 September 2014. Zuidas received substantially more positive responses than did Ørestad, while Ørestad received mostly neutral and negative responses. (Image by van Haaster, J., 2016)

Zuidas site visits were conducted at the Zuidplein, the public space to the north of the infrastructure, which works in connection with the Mahlerplein and the George Gerschwplein to the south (Fig. 13). Ørestad visits were conducted at street level, adjacent to the shopping centre and in close proximity to Kay Fiskers Plads and the Ørestad Train and Metro Station (Fig. 14).



**FIGURE 13** Case area Zuidas. Despite the transitional space characteristics, the layout and detailing of Zuidplein provide smaller pockets of intimacy. Planned within an intricate spatial layout of towers and infrastructure above and below ground, attention to liveability in the case of Zuidas has inspired public space design in the tradition of Jane Jacobs (1961). (Image by van Haaster, J., 2016, and map based part of the questionnaire by Wiemann Nielsen, H., 2014)



**FIGURE 14** Case area Ørestad. Such elements are missing in Ørestad. Instead, small scale interventions aim to introduce 'human scale' elements, primarily of recreational character. Large scale business and institutional structures as well as a shopping centre have generated more localised, introverted public spaces, somehow matched by the train station, which provides connections to nearby Copenhagen Airport and further on to Sweden. (Image by van Haaster, J., 2016, and map based part of the questionnaire by Wiemann Nielsen, H., 2014).

Based in the five themes, Nature, Spatial Layout, Flow, Place Attachment, and Time-Space Pattern, the descriptive statistics worked well to inform the selection of the Hub, while respondent's reactions further informed the themes, supporting the explorative approach.

## Discussion

This study sought to investigate the theme of particular places from the perspective of 'quiet places', by examining potential links between material and immaterial qualities, and subsequently to test a means of tracing them. We hypothesised that there would be a difference in the findings between the types as well as between the two cities. Were we able to test our hypotheses?

There were clear differences between the four types, as well as internal differences between the types, as is evident in the in-depth analyses of the Hub. Precisely because of the differences in the types, this material provides a good basis for discussing the five themes from a cross-case perspective.

In the Nature theme, while the Hub and the Street appear less 'green' than the Neighbourhood or the Waterfront, they still receive well above 50% positive responses, for which we may find inspiration in a broader perspective on Nature as a multitude of 'living forces', including 'genius loci or 'spirit of place' (Norberg-Schultz, 1979). This may also explain the stimulating feeling of everything becoming one, as perceived by a respondent, speaking of "*city, trees, people, animals flow together – in short 'Nature'!*" In the case of the Waterfront, the findings are consistent with those of White, Smith, Humphries, Pahl, Snelling & Depledge (2010), where the restorative effect of water in both natural and urban settings was found to enhance positive reactions, while in the case of the Neighbourhood, the architectonic detailing and balanced blend between cityscape and landscape seems consistent with the thinking on 'biophilia', meaning 'love of life or living systems' (Beatley, 2011).

In all four types, the built environment differs in terms of scale, density, function, and articulation. The structures in the Hub and the Waterfront form individual volumes whereas in the case of the Neighbourhood and the Street, they form an ensemble. In the case of the Hub, the low ranking in the Spatial Layout theme is consistent with the findings of Hajer and Reijndorp (2002), who argue for places with multi-layered meanings, places in which it is possible to meet the 'other', those who are unlike oneself. This characteristic applies less to the Hub than to the Street. In the cases of the Neighbourhood and the Waterfront, the well-articulated, spatial generosity and detailing stimulate a sense of place, a sense of harmony provided by the spatial properties, which for the Waterfront involves unhindered views, allowing for undirected attention. These findings are consistent with those of Ulrich et al. (1991).

In the Flow theme, the findings in the case of the Hub are consistent with Castells' (2009) description of smooth, frictionless environments. The soundscape and flowscape in the Hub and the Street is loud and dense, which may account for the fewer positive responses. There is a notable difference between the two, however, in that the Hub receives 57% positive responses while the Street receives 70%. Why is this the case? The answer may be found in the more mono-functional character of the Hub, also in terms of its soundscape and flow. In the case of the Neighbourhood and in particular the Waterfront, rhythms are softer, smoother, and more free flowing, with abundant space to merge and mingle, highlighting the importance of qualities such as *genius loci* and *chi*, as suggested by the findings of Mills (1999) and Csikszentmihalyi (1992).

In the case of the Place-Attachment theme, the feeling of alignment provided by connection with one's surroundings or with the earth, figuratively or literally, may not be reflected in the generic architectural and spatial qualities of the predominantly work-related environment of the Hub. It ranks lowest among the four types individually, while positive responses in the General Appreciation Category exceed 70%. We suggest that the findings are consistent with those of Massey (1994), who questions the potential for retaining a sense of local place and its particularity, arguing instead for a global sense of place. They are also consistent with those of Araujo (2013), who argues that 'the city' no longer exists.

With linear time-cycles dominating the Hub, responses to the Time-Space Pattern are consistent with the findings of Lefebvre (1992, 2013), paralleling such time-cycles with Cartesian geometry and a reductive understanding of space. Cyclical time scales are just as present in the Hub as in the other four types but may be easier to identify in the other types due to functional differences. We speculate that the Hub's structure and functionality by themselves stimulate a linear mental environment whereas the Street, the Neighbourhood, and the Waterfront stimulate a different environment, allowing for a higher degree of resonance, of connecting with cyclical time scales, emotions, and feelings. These findings are consistent with those of Rosa (2015), who suggests that the concept of resonance might help us escape the acceleration cycle.

The implications of this study apply to theory as well as practice. They add a new perspective to the long acknowledged relationship between green spaces and restorative qualities for humans, by bringing forth new insights on interlinkages between material and immaterial aspects of the environment in a relational spatial context. It proposes a 'quiet place' perspective, instead of a 'quiet area' perspective and suggests that particular places in urban settings can be characterised by 'material-immaterial landscapes' properties. By looking into other disciplines and formulating five thematic lenses, it offers a new vocabulary to inspire understandings of place for the landscape metropolis.

The limitations should also be addressed. Conducting the study in a transdisciplinary setting, including users' perceptions and opinions, meant that the investigation tools and empirical material were perhaps too complex. That said, the iterative approach and explorative method allowed us the necessary flexibility to add qualitative interviews, when the questionnaire survey failed to capture subtleties and nuances in the respondents' reactions.

Research on the concept of 'quiet places' could continue in many directions. Here, we have made an initial identification of the phenomenon and have come up with a suggestion about interlinkages between place characteristics and material and immaterial qualities. We have focused on stimulating and uplifting perspectives and have briefly touched on the relationship between inner climate and outer climate. This remains to be studied. Further investigations of the Eastern concept of managing dynamics through a 'relative stillness or quietness' has the potential for inspiring the Western concept of managing resources through quantitative measures, and opening new avenues towards a broader definition of sustainability. Spatial characteristics and sound properties also require further parallel investigation, with reference to their dimensional properties and perceived impacts.

## Conclusion

In order to study interlinkages between material and immaterial qualities of particular places and their perceived value as 'quiet', we applied a combined perspective on flow, rhythm, aesthetic experience, and resonance, and physical and functional parameters. By looking into other disciplines, we developed five thematic lenses that turned out to be useful for an understanding of a set of particular places in the compact city and the landscape metropolis. We examined spatial configurations of four spatial types for which the themes worked as frames of understanding, guiding our investigation and design of investigation tools. We adopted an explorative method's approach and conducted a 'semi-quantitative' survey, by which we introduced a field of tension between the ephemeral quality of the phenomenon in question and the nitty gritty magic of everyday life.

We investigated the theme of particular places from the perspective of 'quiet places', and learned that linkages may be produced by properties such as open horizons, spatial layout and articulation, architectural properties, textures, and materials – not just by 'green' parameters or dB ratio levels. That spatial generosity and unhindered views may allow us to expand to the fullness of our being, and that urban soundscapes also hold the potential for enhancing 'quiet place' characteristics through their 'flow' properties.

Adding characteristics of particular places together does not equal 'material-immaterial landscapes'. However, based on the linkages and relational characters of place, we see the potential for developing a new vocabulary for the balancing and uplifting qualities in dense urban environments, advancing our understanding of particular places in the relational city and landscape metropolis from the perspective of 'quiet places'.

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